



**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE (BHR)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

SIERRA LEONE – Complex Emergency

Situation Report #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2001

April 20, 2001

Note: the last situation report was dated September 12, 2000.

BACKGROUND

Since 1991, Sierra Leone has been embroiled in a civil war and humanitarian crisis. The war has claimed at least 20,000 lives and, at its peak, forced almost half of Sierra Leone's 4.5 million inhabitants from their homes, including an estimated 400,000 to Guinea. In 1999, the anti-government Revolutionary United Front (RUF), notorious for their human rights abuses, and the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) declared a cease-fire and signed the Lome Peace Accord, officially ending the war. In November 1999, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) peacekeepers were charged with providing security to GOSL-controlled areas of the country.

In May 2000, the peace process suffered a setback when RUF fighters killed several UNAMSIL peacekeepers and took hostage approximately 500 more in a series of attacks in the north and east of the country. During this period, relief agencies were forced to evacuate the country and humanitarian assistance was temporarily ceased. In the second half of 2000, relief agencies regained access to affected areas and resumed humanitarian assistance activities. In November 2000, the GOSL and the RUF signed a new cease-fire agreement and RUF leaders expressed an interest in allowing humanitarian relief agencies greater access to RUF held territory. In January 2001, the RUF agreed to open several roads in previously inaccessible areas of the country to relief agencies.

NUMBERS AFFECTED AT A GLANCE

- In November 2000, the United Nations Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported there were 341,205 registered Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Sierra Leone. UNOCHA estimates that another one million IDPs in Sierra Leone have not been registered.
- According to UNHCR, there are approximately 330,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea. Since September 2000, more than 50,000 refugees have returned to Sierra Leone from Guinea.
- Since 1991, more than 20,000 people have been killed during the conflict.

CURRENT SITUATION

The security situation in Sierra Leone has remained relatively calm during the past six months. However, there continues to be reports of sporadic fighting along the northern and eastern borders of the country. The RUF still has control of much of the diamond producing, forest region of Sierra Leone, but has recently shown a willingness to negotiate with the GOSL and UNAMSIL officials, as well as to allow humanitarian relief agencies greater access to RUF controlled areas. As the security situation in Guinea remains tense and cross-border attacks into Guinea intensify, thousands of Sierra Leonean refugees continue to return to their country by ship and on foot.

Population Movements

Relief agencies estimate that 50,000 - 60,000 Sierra Leonean refugees living in Guinea have returned to their country since September 2000. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR report that, as of March 30, they have assisted more than 30,000 refugees in their return to Freetown by boat. Thousands more have returned on foot. Since the

outbreak of violence in the Parrot's Beak in early March, the U.S. Embassy in Freetown and several relief agencies have reported daily arrivals of refugees to the eastern Sierra Leone towns of Kenema and Daru. UNHCR reported that they registered over 4,000 returned refugees in Kenema in March. The U.S. Embassy and the International Medical Corps (IMC) reported on March 30, that Daru was receiving about 120 returnees a day. However, since the end of March, IMC reported that most of these Sierra Leonean returnees seem to be coming from Liberia rather than Guinea. UNHCR also reported on March 23 that an estimated 13,000 refugees have walked to Lungi since September 2000. As the numbers of returnees grow, particularly in Freetown, where the IDP camps are at or above capacity, the GOSL and relief agencies are attempting to relocate the returnees to host communities in secure areas of Sierra Leone.

Resettlement of IDPs

On March 20, the GOSL launched "National Resettlement Day" in Sierra Leone. All of the Western Area and the Bo district, as well as parts of Kenema have been declared safe by the GOSL for the

resettlement of IDPs. IOM and other relief agencies are working to move IDPs from the overcrowded IDP camps in Freetown back to their home areas, if secure. Relief agencies are also working to sensitize the local officials and residents to the resettlement process.

Food Security

One of the greatest challenges to the relief community is meeting the food needs of the displaced in Sierra Leone. There are four implementing agencies supporting emergency food assistance in Sierra Leone. They are CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), World Vision, and the U.N. World Food Program (WFP). In January, the four food agencies distributed 4,400 metric tons (MT) to 397,000 beneficiaries, and 5,476 MT in February. As of March 1, emergency food stocks in Sierra Leone totaled 12,400 MT and scheduled shipments should be sufficient to meet the needs of resettling refugees, IDPs, and other vulnerable groups through August 2001. In April, food distributions to Freetown IDP camp residents who come from secure areas of the country are scheduled to be curtailed, replaced with resettlement, food for work, and food for agriculture rations, provided in their home areas.

Humanitarian Response and Coordination

As relief agencies continue to gain access to RUF-controlled areas of Sierra Leone, tens of thousands of Sierra Leoneans who were previously isolated from humanitarian assistance are now starting to receive agricultural, health, and other types of assistance. UNOCHA is the lead coordinating body for the relief community in Sierra Leone. Several other U.N. bodies including the World Food Program (WFP), UNICEF, and Food and Agriculture (FAO) also have programs in Sierra Leone. In addition to the U.N. bodies, there are several International Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working in Sierra Leone including: International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), IOM, Action Against Hunger (ACF), Africare, American Refugee Committee (ARC), CARE, CRS, IMC, World Vision and others. These organizations work in several sectors including: agriculture, health, nutrition, food security, water/sanitation, shelter, reintegration, and human rights.

Political/Military

In late March, UNAMSIL and RUF officials held discussions in Lunsar, Daru, and Port Loko. The two groups discussed the implementation of the November 2000 cease-fire agreement and improved access for UNAMSIL troops and relief agencies. The National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR) is continuing to discharge former fighters from their demobilization centers. As of March 23, the NCDDR has enrolled 11,039 ex-fighters in its countrywide reintegration program, which includes agriculture, small enterprise development,

apprenticeship, and public works activities to help reintegrate the former fighters into Sierra Leonean society.

On March 30, U.N. Security Council (UNSC) approved a six-month extension, through September 30, 2000, of UNAMSIL's peacekeeping mandate in Sierra Leone. The UNSC also approved an increase in troop strength from 13,000 to 17,500 personnel. On March 20, 776 U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)-trained Nigerian soldiers deployed to Lunsar as part of the UNAMSIL mission. On March 21, the DOD announced it will continue to provide training and support to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) troops participating in the UNAMSIL peacekeeping mission. The second phase of DOD's three-phase operation to support the ECOWAS troops is scheduled to begin in May 2000.

USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Since the conflict in Sierra Leone began more than ten years ago, the United States Government (USG) has provided more than \$300 million in humanitarian assistance to Sierra Leone. In addition to OFDA, several other USAID and U.S. Department of State (State) offices and bureaus provide humanitarian assistance support to Sierra Leone. These include: the Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP), Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI), the Africa Bureau (USAID/AFR), and State's Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (State/PRM). The total assistance provided by each office and bureau for FY 2000 and FY 2001, to date, is included below.

• USAID/OFDA Assistance

USAID/OFDA provided \$11.8 million in FY 2000 to U.N agencies and NGOs for the implementation of emergency programs in Sierra Leone. Program sectors included: agriculture, health, nutrition, shelter, and water/sanitation. To date, USAID/OFDA has committed \$9.7 million in FY 2001 for the following emergency programs in Sierra Leone:

ACF – Emergency Nutrition and Water/Sanitation activities in Makeni, Magburaka, Mile 91, Lungi, and Freetown.....\$1,802,831

Africare – Agricultural and Health Assistance programs in the Northern and Eastern Provinces\$1,100,481

CARE – Rural Resettlement projects in Southern Tonkolili and Northern Moyamba Districts ..\$2,382,717

CRS – Agricultural, Health, and Housing programs in Tonkolili and Moyamba Districts.....\$1,336,286

UNICEF – Humanitarian Appeal for Women and Children.....\$700,000

World Vision – Agriculture and Housing activities in Sierra Leone..... \$1,699,932

WFP – Helicopter Support for Food Assistance activities in Sierra Leone \$750,000

Total USAID/OFDA FY 2000 \$11,876,120

Total USAID/OFDA FY 2001, to date \$9,772,247

- **USAID/FFP Assistance**

In FY 2000, USAID/FFP provided a total of \$24 million, including 40,000 metric tons (MT) of commodities, to WFP and NGOs for the implementation and distribution of emergency food assistance to vulnerable groups in Sierra Leone. In FY 2001, USAID/FFP estimates providing \$30.9 million, including 51,390 MT of commodities for emergency food assistance in Sierra Leone.

Total USAID/FFP FY 2000 \$23,810,600

Total USAID/FFP FY 2001, to date \$30,900,000

- **USAID/OTI Assistance**

USAID/OTI obligated \$4,234,230 in FY 2000 for support of civil society programs, education and training programs for ex-combatants, diamond policy to address "conflict" diamonds, and elections assistance to Sierra Leone. This included \$950,000 of Development Fund for Africa (DFA) funds from USAID/AFR and \$250,000 in Economic Support Funds (ESF). In FY 2001, USAID/OTI expects to obligate \$5,584,081, which includes \$950,000 ESF.

Total USAID/OTI FY 2000 \$3,284,230*

Total USAID/OTI FY 2001, to date..... \$3,804,081

(*Note: This total does not include the \$950,000 in DFA funds USAID/OTI implemented on behalf of USAID/AFR.)

- **USAID/AFR Assistance**

In FY 2000, USAID/AFR provided \$2.9 million in support of several programs in Sierra Leone including the Leahy War Victims Fund and the Displaced Children's and Orphan's Fund, as well as reintegration assistance, electoral/political processes support; and support for the reconciliation process, including human rights. The planned development assistance level for FY 2001 is \$5 million.

Total USAID/AFR FY 2000.....\$2,917,000

Total USAID/AFR FY 2001, to dateN/A

- **State/PRM Assistance**

State/PRM provided \$7 million in FY 2000 to several U.N. agencies and International Organizations for refugee repatriation and reintegration, health care, education, and assistance to victims of gender based violence in Sierra Leone. In addition, State/PRM provided \$10.8 million for Sierra Leonean refugee assistance programs in Guinea and Liberia in FY 2000. State/PRM anticipates a similar level of commitment to their ongoing Sierra Leone programs in FY 2001.

Total State/PRM FY 2000\$7,089,144

Total State/PRM FY 2001, to dateN/A

TOTAL USG Humanitarian Assistance FY 2000

.....\$48,997,094

TOTAL USG Humanitarian Assistance in FY 2001, to date.....\$44,476,328

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USAID/OFDA bulletins can be obtained from the USAID web site at http://www.usaid.gov/hum_response/ofda/situation.html